No Objection to Declassification in Part 2010/12/17 : LOC-HAK-260-3-32-4

DOS Review Completed.

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

TO WHITE HOUSE

S E C R E T/SENSITIVE 241953Z [redacted]

25X1

EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY
IMMEDIATE
MAY 24, 1974
HAKTO 147
TO: GENERAL SCOWCROFT
FROM: THE SECRETARY
PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT:
BEGIN MESSAGE:

1. I HAVE COMPLETED HOURS OF DISCUSSIONS HERE IN ISRAEL WITH PRIME MINISTER MEIR AND HER KEY CABINET MEMBERS AS A PRELUDE TO MY FINAL EFFORT TOMORROWN IN DAMASCUS TO BRING ABOUT AN AGREEMENT. I REMAIN DOUBTFUL THAT THE REMAINING ISSUES CAN BE RESOLVED, FOR ONE THING, THIS SITUATION IS DIFFERENT THAN THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. IN THAT INSTANCE SADAT IN PARTICULAR HAD MADE A FUNDAMENTAL DECISION NOT TO PERMIT MARGINAL DETAILS TO SIDETRACK THE AGREEMENT. IN THIS PARTICULAR NEGOTIATION, BOTH SIDES ARE NEGOTIATING HARD AND TENACIOUSLY ON EVERY PRINCIPAL SPECIFIC POINT, A REFLECTION OF THE DEEP SUSPICION THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THEM.

2. ASSAD SEES DISENGAGEMENT AS A PAUSE THAT WILL RETAIN FOR HIM EITHER THE WAR OR THE PEACE OPTION AND THEREFORE IS NEGOTIATING DOGGEDLY TO GIVE HIM AN AGREEMENT WITH AS MUCH FLEXIBILITY AS POSSIBLE TO MOVE EITHER WAY.

3. THE DISCUSSIONS NOW ARE FOCUSSING ON INDIVIDUAL SPECIFIC DETAILS, NO ONE OF WHICH SHOULD BE A BREAKING POINT, BUT WHEN TAKEN TOGETHER AS A GROUP COULD REQUIRE WEEKS MORE OF NEGOTIATIONS UNLESS MORE FLEXIBILITY WILL DEVELOP IN THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. WITHOUT GETTING TOO TECHNICAL, HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES: IN THE TEN KILOMETER DISENGAGEMENT ZONE ISRAEL IS INSISTING ON NO ARTILLERY WHILE SYRIA INSISTS ON 54 SHORT-RANGE ARTILLERY PIECES. THE NUMBERS ARE ALSO AT ISSUE. IN THE 10 TO 25 KILOMETER AREA ASSAD REFUSES TO AGREE TO ANY LIMITATION ON MILITARY PERSONNEL OR TANKS WHICH THE ISRAELIS WANT. WE HAVE HIS AGREEMENT TO POSITION SAMS

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SCOWCROFT, MCFARLANE, SECFILE

RECALLED
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AND LONG-RANGE ARTILLERY OUTSIDE THE ZONE. ASSAD IS INSISTING THAT HIS DEFENSE LINE BE ADVANCED MORE WESTWARD THAN WHERE IT IS PRESENTLY PLACED. ISRAEL IS GIVING US A NEW MAP TONIGHT MOVING THE LINE WESTWARD, BUT WHETHER THIS WILL BE ENOUGH FOR ASSAD OR NOT IS PROBLEMATICAL. IRONICALLY, WITH ALL OF THE DIFFICULTIES THE ISRAELIS HAVE HAD IN THE PAST WITH THE UN, IT IS PRESSING FOR A MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE UN PRESENCE BOTH IN NUMBERS AND IN MANDATE THAN ASSAD SEEMS WILLING TO ALLOW AT THE PRESENT.

4. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER SIMILAR ISSUES WHICH I WILL ALSO SEEK TO SORT OUT IN A CLIMACTIC EFFORT TOMORROW. I WILL REPORT PROMPTLY AFTER MY MEETING WITH ASSAD.
END OF MESSAGE.
WARM REGARDS.

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